Annex "A" Subparagraph 1k,

Sociological Background

RELIGION

771 795 The Votes are Greek Orthodox, just like the Russians and their close relatives, the Ingrians. Until the revolution of 1917, they stuck faithfully to their religious customs. But under the Bolshevist rule, only the older generation has continued the old religious practices, whereas the youth has become indifferent to the religion.

[784] The devotion to Greek Orthodoxy has brought the Votes nearer to the Russians and to the Ingrians, at the same time alienating them from the Finns, who are Lutherans. One indication of this may be seen in the fact that, at least during the czarist rule, the Votes normally did not marry Finns, but they would intermarry with the Russians and the Ingrians.

771 ● 778 The Votes, although being ardent Orthodox, have, nevertheless not gotten completely rid of their ancient heathenism. We know very little of the Votes' ancient religion, and all we know refers to the worship of holy trees and springs. There were up to most recent times some trees or groves in Votic villages which were considered sacred. One such grove, surrounded by a high fence, was to be found in Baabina village. Although it was known by the name "Elijah's Birch," actually mainly aspens 796 grew there. Each year on Elijah's Day the village people used to go to the grove to celebrate there a festival. The people remember that in older times an ox was sacrificed

796 in the grove. At the beginning of this century, however, they took there only bread and butter on a plate and candles for worshiping God. At the grove they set up tables and ate there. After eating they sat on the bench in a line and drank beer which was made by a farmer especially for all of them to drink. In a couple of hours, the people from other villages would join them in drinking. Alava, who has described this festival, compares it with the so-called vakkove-festival of the Ingrians.

778 In olden times the Votes also worshipped holy springs. One of them was called "Elijah's Spring." The water of this spring was clear and cool and it was considered to possess great power. At the spring there grew a high oak [796] tree which was also regarded as sacred. On Elijah's Day at midsummer the people used to organize a fair, called "Elijah's Fair," near this spring.

796 Elijah, who plays such an important role in Votes' ancient religion, seems to be their national saint. There are some other traces of the Elijah's cult preserved among the Votes. In Pummala, for instance, the bones of the ram, who was slaughtered for Elijah's Day, were taken to two crosses which were just beyond the village and were called "Elijah's Cross."

771 The above remarks refer to former times. What about the situation among the Votes nowadays? Prof. Ränk, who in 1942-43 studied the Votes, found the Greek Orthodoxy and the ancient paganism still existing side by side. It should be mentioned that at this time the Votes were occupied by the Germans who did not impede their religious practices, but rather encourag-
778 ed them. Therefore the icons, which were re-

778 moved and hidden during the Bolshevist rule, had been set up again in the rear corner of the room, called "God's corner" (jumalnurkka). But on the stands of the icons there were also several other things which had no direct bearing on the Church belief. Such were, for instance, the twigs of willow trees which has been brought in at Palm Sunday and which were used to drive the herd out to the pasture on St. [755] George's Day. In addition, there were various magic herbs which were used for making smoke to cure sicknesses, a piece of artus bread which was baked for Easter, a holiday egg, etc. Before the introduction of the kolkhoz system, the people used to keep in "God's corner" also the first and last sheaf of rye cut in the field.

789 The Votes seem to have preserved up to the present day some traits of the belief in the special power of the trees. For Whitsuntide green birches were put in "God's corner," around the house and especially in front of the windows. These birches were used, as Prof. Ränk thinks, not only for decoration, but probably also for scaring off the bad spirits who could be active at this time. The juniper was considered to have a special magic power. The people called the juniper "cross-tree," since on each juniper berry there is the sign of a cross; for this reason the juniper was believed to have the power to ward off any kind of evil. According to old customs, the farmer on St. George's Day pulled a juniper together with its roots, out of the earth and hung it in the attic of his house. This juniper protected the house against all evil, especially against lightning. The belief in the protective power of the juniper seems to be still alive among the people, since Prof. Ränk found in a loft a big juniper branch stuck between the roof beams.

782 starting to build a house, it is customary when to put
342 some money, sugar and liquor under the foundation so that the protective spirit of the house will eat and drink and guard the house. When the house is finished, some white bread, liquor and beer is put on the loft for the house spirit. It is believed that if the people do not take care of the house spirit, the lightning will strike and
782 burn the house. When sowing flax liquor is poured for the flax mother. In former times the people used to place various offerings at the edge of the field for several field spirits, and when they ate in the forest, they left some food on a hill for the forest god.

Especially common are the offerings to the sea mother and sea father. To launch a new boat or start a voyage, the Livonians used to pour some liquor into the sea. Liquor and white bread are offered to the sea also on Easter morning. When going to fish for the first time in the spring, they pray and make offerings; when they return, they throw a handful of fish into the sea. Offerings are also made during a storm and when going to swim for the first time.

• 778 The Livonians formerly had holy stones and holy trees. One such stone was to be found in Knabenberg (Latvian, Puishkalns); the Livonians and Latvians worshipped it and honored it with offerings. A holy linden at Augenmünde (seven versts from Piza village) has been famous for centuries in all of North

4: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4 Livonians

178 Kurland. During war times the people used to pray under it and throw its leaves into the water. If the leaves floated against the current, this meant that their prayer was heard by God.

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1: Karutz--20 E-4 (no date) 1925 El Europe

Estonians KG4

0001.-2. Physical types. 3. Old men's costume. 4. Grinding the potter's clay. 5. All Souls /Day/. 6. Bag-piper. 7. Adustable ceiling lamp. 8. Kettle hook made of a bent branch. 9. "Swedish harp." 10. Basket. 11. Ancient place of sacrifice. 12. Shepherd's horn. 13. Small cask used by the field workers for drinking. 14. Kummet with carved horses' heads. 15. Pennant from Lake Peipus. 16. Model of a Lodje /type of sail boat/ from Lake Peipus. 17. Ceiling chandelier (Yule chandelier). 18. Old harp. 19.-20. Beer mugs with northern designs. (horse, sun).[1]

Nos. 6-10, 14-20 are in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Lübeck.

/24/ The Estonians.

III.

778 As late as the year 1918 I was shown an ancient place of sacrifice (Figure 11) in Estonian, a small artificial cave with bones. As in Lithuania so here spiritual goods from early European times have been preserved. The national epic Kalewipoeg, as well as old chronicles
789 of the earliest German times, give support to this. Of course black magic was practiced as in Finland, though to a slighter degree. Those who could not master it went to the experts across the ocean and to Lapland. A Lapp is enjoined to help the Kalewipoeg "to take the path of wisdom, to travel to the end of the world, to seek the end of the world where the hands of the Ancient Father have tied tight the edges of heaven, attached them tightly to the earth..." The basis of their magic, even if only in memory, was a knowledge of the spiritual powers in all worldly matters, of their forces which work constantly and everywhere, of their relationship to man. They knew of and took the spirits
[266] in matter and in the human body when they used emanative magic medicines, when they, as was reported of the year 1221, cut the heart out of the body of a living Danish governor /Vogt/, fried and ate it in order to become the braver and stronger against the Christians. This is a process which is repeated in the total phenomenon of cannibalism and originates from the same spiritual source of common consciousness. Numerous customs are based on this knowledge of the inner connection in the spiritual sphere between men and cosmos. A misfortune which has been mysteriously blown towards one by magic disappears when one
791 walks against the wind. Higher knowledge and thus higher magic powers were possessed by people who at times were able to separate themselves off from the bodily cloak, to become "haltia," to travel as free spirits

[1] [For illustrations, see 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat. 116, p. 19a--Ana.]